

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABIDJA 02084 190948Z

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7607

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ABIDJAN 2084

E O 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, IV

SUBJ: HOUPHOUET BEGINS NORTHERN TRAVEL

REF: ABIDJAN 1814

1. PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY DEPARTED ABIDJAN THIS MORNING FOR A VISIT OF SOME TWELVE DAYS TO THE NORTH, RETURNING TO YAMOUSSOUKRO ON MARCH 30. IN HIS LARGE DELEGATION ARE ONE-HALF OF THE SUBSTANTIVE MINISTERS (THOSE CONCERNED ESSENTIALLY WITH THE BASIC SECTORS OF DEVELOPMENT), PDCI SECRETARY GENERAL YACE, AND A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE BUREAU POLITIQUE. NOT ONLY IS ABIDJAN BEING EMPTIED OF MANY OF ITS TOP OFFICIALS, BUT CADRES AROUND THE COUNTRY FROM THE REGION HAVE ALSO ALL DEPARTED FOR HOME IN ORDER TO HELP LEAD THE DISCUSSION OF LOCAL CONCERNS WHEN HOUPHOUET ARRIVES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE LOCALITIES.

2. SPENDING THE NIGHT IN KORHOGO, BOUNDIALI, AND FERKESSEDOUGOU, THE PRESIDENT WILL VISIT EVERY SOUS-PREFECTURE, EVEN THE MOST ISOLATED,

IN THE THREE DEPARTMENT REGION FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE-HALF DAY EACH. HE WILL BE GREETED UPON HIS ARRIVAL EACH TIME BY A LOCAL PERSONALITY OF THE AREA WHO WILL UNDOUBTEDLY MAKE CERTAIN REQUESTS, HOUPHOUET WILL REPLY, AND THEN THERE WILL PROBABLY BE INFORMAL DISCUSSION AND OCLE AND TAKE. ACCORDING TO PRESIDENTIAL PROTOCOL CHIEF QUEGNIN, HOUPHOUET'S PROGRAM HAS SUFFICIENT FLEXIIBILITY AND FREE TIME TO

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PAGE 02 ABIDJA 02084 190948Z

PERMIT HIM TO SPEND LONG HOURS IN MEETING WITH PEOPLE. AS A NORTHERNER

REMARKED, PEOPLE OUTSIDE ABIDJAN DO NOT HAVE THE SAME UNDERSTANDING OF TIME AS THE URBAN POPULATION HERE, AND HOUPHOUET CAN EXPECT TO BE DELUGED WITH CALLERS AT ALL HOURS OF THE DAY AND NIGHT.

3. THUS OLD POLITICIAN HOUPHOUET HITS THE HUSTINGS AS HE HAD NOT DONE FOR SOME TIME. WHAT SHOULD BE QUITE AN ARDUOUS TRIP WILL PROBABLY BE MARKED BY BOTH GENUINE AFFECTION AND NUMEROUS REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE FOR ONE OF THE POORER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.
SMITH

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